

New Liberty Theatre will be renovated

By CRAIG CLOHESSY
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It's official, work will begin shortly on renovating the fire-damaged New Liberty Theatre in downtown Camas.

Members of the Farrell family, owners of the facility, received final design/construction bids on Friday, and made the decision over the weekend to move ahead with renovation plans.

Glenda Schuh, a member of the Farrell family and spokesperson for the group, said plans call for completion of the project by the end of July.

Plans, Schuh indicated, call for the 413-seat theater to maintain the 1920s to '30s motif and historic look.

Lease Crutcher Lewis and GBD Architects out of Portland will be coordinating the project. They will work with the Farrell family and First Independent Bank on the construction project designed to reopen the theater.

Schuh said a number of firms came through with bids on the project, and the family is happy with the numbers they have seen related to cost of renovation.

"We were very pleased with the bid proposals," Schuh said. "It was very exciting to see the amount of interest expressed in working on this project."

Previous project experience of Lease Crutcher Lewis includes Lacamas Credit Union — Washougal branch, Weyerhaeuser Credit Union in Longview, Wash., and the Kaiser Permanente Medical Clinic in Vancouver.

GDB Architects project experience includes Ross Ragland Theater in Klamath Falls, Ore., The Auditorium Building, The Kress Building and the Skidmore Fountain Building, all in Portland.

The Farrell family is currently in the process of finalizing contract terms with the two firms. After that is completed, Schuh said, review of code issues will be addressed with the City of Camas and design drawings will begin.

If renovations are completed on schedule, the New Liberty Theatre should be ready to open just under a year from the date of the tragic fire that damaged the structure and led to its closure.

The fire, which swept through the theater during the early morning hours of Aug. 27, 1994, seriously damaged the lobby and upstairs portion of the building. During inspections of the facility, minimal structural damage was found. The auditorium portion of the theater was largely spared, with damage limited to smoke and collapse of the movie screen.